



The State of New Hampshire
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES



Thomas S. Burack, Commissioner

March 14, 2007

Representative James G. Phinizy, Chair
House Environment & Agriculture Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 303
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

Subject: **HB 416 relative to mercury reduction**

Dear Chairman Phinizy and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 416, which seeks to enact a disposal ban on mercury-added products in the State of New Hampshire.

The disposal ban on mercury-added products proposed in HB 416 is consistent with the objective of virtual elimination of man-made mercury releases in New Hampshire's *Mercury Reduction Strategy* and the *Regional Mercury Action Plan (RMAP)* endorsed by the New England states and the Eastern Canadian provinces.

Although we have exceeded the *NH Mercury Reduction Strategy's* initial goal of a 50% reduction in mercury emissions, much more remains to be done. Strict emissions limits have reduced mercury emissions from waste combustion sources, but it is imperative that we continue working to address the root cause of those emissions: the mercury content of solid wastes. Many common products such as thermometers, thermostats, switches and measuring devices contribute mercury to the waste stream when they are discarded. When these items are burned, broken or improperly disposed of, mercury is released to the environment.

Mercury is a highly persistent and toxic pollutant that accumulates in the food chain. Like 40 other states, New Hampshire has issued a freshwater fish consumption advisory due to elevated levels of mercury in fish and the resulting threat to public health.

We would be pleased to assist the Committee in any way that we can. Please call Stephanie D'Agostino (271-6398) if you have any questions or would like further information.

Sincerely,

Thomas S. Burack
Commissioner

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